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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

6 December 1985

The Pakistani Navy: No Match for India's

Summary

The Pakistani Navy, in our view, would be unable in the event of a military conflict with India to thwart a naval blockade of Karachi--Pakistan's only major port. The Navy could not inflict enough damage on Indian military and commercial shipping to persuade New Delhi to lift its blockade or even substantially alter the course of the conflict. Pakistan's ability to inflict damage will increase as it obtains new antiship missiles over the next few years, but the continuing growth of the Indian Navy will allow it to contain most Pakistani ships at Karachi.

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The Pakistani Navy cannot match the Indian Navy in the number of combatants or armaments. Pakistan has only six destroyers, eight missile boats, three minesweepers, and six French submarines (see chart). Only its missile boats are armed

This paper was prepared for Michael MacMurray, Department of Defense, by [] Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESAs, []

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[redacted]

with Chinese Styx antiship missiles. Most of New Delhi's destroyers, frigates, and missile boats are armed with Soviet Styx antiship missiles. [redacted]

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India's naval aviation is also superior to that of Pakistan.

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[redacted]

The Indian Air Force enjoys a 2-to-1 air superiority over the Pakistani Air Force. [redacted]

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Strategies

Pakistani Navy officials undoubtedly know that the odds are greatly against them in keeping open Karachi which is vital for resupply, in our view. Indian aircraft and perhaps submarines probably would lay mines at Karachi that Pakistan's three antiquated minesweepers would be unable to clear. Indian naval aircraft would attack Mirages based near Karachi and any Pakistani surface ships nearby. Indian submarines would search for Pakistani surface ships and attack any Pakistani or foreign ships attempting to challenge the blockade. India's surface ships probably would concentrate on protecting Bombay, the country's most important port, and the sea lanes leading to it from attacks by Pakistani submarines. [redacted]

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The Pakistani Navy could not inflict enough damage on the Indian Navy or commercial ships heading towards India to persuade New Delhi to lift its blockade and negotiate an end to hostilities, in our view.

--Pakistan's naval support squadron could inflict damage on Indian surface ships only if the ships approach Karachi to strengthen a blockade. Although Pakistan's F-16s have the range attack Indian ships near Bombay, the F-16s probably would be used against other targets. [redacted]

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--Islamabad would, if hostilities seemed imminent, order its six aging destroyers to head toward the Persian Gulf to avoid Indian air attacks. [redacted]

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--If Pakistan's French-built submarines survive a surprise

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[REDACTED]

Indian air attack, they might be able to inflict damage on Indian surface ships, but not enough to end a blockade, in our view. [REDACTED]

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Help from Abroad

During a war ask France and China for naval supplies, including Exocets, torpedoes, and Styx missiles, but supplies sent by sea probably would not arrive until after the fighting and the Pakistani Army and Air Force would receive most of the supplies sent by air. The Pakistani Navy probably would ask the US for Harpoon antiship missiles, its major US weapons system.

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Outlook

Pakistan, in our view, has no chance of changing in its favor the naval balance with India. The addition of 16-submarine launched Harpoon antiship missiles and 32 ship-launched Harpoons over the next two years will, however, increase the possible costs of a blockade to India. The Pakistanis hope to modernize their navy over the next five years with the addition of three British type-21 frigates, two US Knox destroyers, and advanced US electronics and close-in naval air defense systems such as Vulcan Phalanx air defense guns. [REDACTED]

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At the same time, however, India will increase its numerical superiority over Pakistan. [REDACTED]

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Current Indian and Pakistani Naval Forces

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| | India | Pakistan |
|--------------------|-------|----------|
| Carriers | 1 | 0 |
| Destroyers | 3 | 6 |
| Frigates | 23 | 0 |
| Submarines | 5 | 6 |
| Missile combatants | 15 | 8 |
| Minesweepers | 15 | 3 |
| Total | 62 | 23 |

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SUBJECT: The Pakistani Navy: No Match for India's

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